

RIVERS ALLIANCE OF CONNECTICUT  
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TO: Sen. Ed Meyer and Rep. Linda Gentile, Chairmen,  
and Members of the Committee on the Environment

**RE: Public Hearing on RB 5081**

***AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHOROUS REDUCTION REIMBURSEMENTS TO MUNICIPALITIES.***

DATE: February 19, 2014

*Rivers Alliance of Connecticut is the statewide, non-profit coalition of river organizations, individuals, and businesses formed to protect and enhance Connecticut's waters by promoting sound water policies, uniting and strengthening the state's many river groups, and educating the public about the importance of water stewardship.*

Dear Sen. Meyer, Rep. Gentile, and Members of the Environment Committee:

Rivers Alliance writes in support of RB 5081 for its assistance to municipal wastewater utilities for phosphorus removal. There is wide recognition that the nutrient nitrogen in excess causes dead zones in LI Sound. The nutrient phosphorus is equally harmful in freshwater; and in the Sound's shoreline areas, phosphorus interacts with nitrogen to stimulate plant and algae growths.

Inland, you can observe the effects of phosphorus in ponds that are covered with a thick scum. In lakes, such as Lake Lillinonah, for example, excess phosphorus can stimulate the growth of toxic blue-green algae that make the water unsafe for swimming. The algae (actually a type of plant-like bacteria) can sicken or even kill a small creature such as a dog -- or a child.

Most towns are not challenging the desirability of removing more phosphorus from wastewater. But they explain that they cannot afford the most effective technologies. If so, they need assistance. We should be able to clean up after ourselves, and not send problems downstream.

Thanks for your attention.

Margaret Miner  
Executive Director